Backpacking the Talkeetna Mountains

4 Day Backpacking Adventure

Hatcher Pass -Talkeetna Mountains



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Thank you for considering a trip with Alaska Alpine Adventures! We have spent the past 25 years perfecting the art of guiding expeditions throughout the most remote wilderness regions of Alaska with folks just like you. Included below is much of the information you'll need to prepare & plan for your trip. Of course, never hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

Before booking a trip with Alaska Alpine Adventures, we encourage you to thoroughly read our Reservation & Cancellation Policies below AND make sure you read and understand your personal responsibilities delineated on the <u>Safety & Responsibility page on our website</u>.

Our policies are intended to be fair, both to our guests and to our small business. Ultimately, we are a small adventure travel company operating on public lands in some of the world's most remote and challenging environments. Our groups are intentionally small, our operating season each year is incredibly short, and each spot on a trip represents an irreplaceable opportunity. The closer to a trip's start date that a guest cancels, the more difficult it becomes to fill that spot, and that is what informs our cancellation policy.

It's also the reason that we **STRONGLY RECOMMEND PURCHASING TRIP CANCELLATION & INTERRUPTION INSURANCE.**

Both <u>TRAVEL GUARD</u> & <u>RIPCORD</u> are good options. We're excited to share Alaska with you, in the most authentic way we believe possible! Thanks so much for understanding, and for choosing Alaska Alpine Adventures. We'll see you in Alaska soon!



Fall colors in the Talkeetna Mountains

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The Curated Experience

Perhaps Steve Howe of Backpacker Magazine described the Talkeetnas best. In his May 2003 article he said, "Once we dry out, I'll be grateful for this more intimate encounter with the surprising Talkeetnas. I'd expected rounded talus peaks, but these summits are awesomely steep, and the tundra travel is as rugged as anywhere I've seen. Separated from the Chugach by the Matanuska Valley and Glenn Highway, the Talkeetnas have their own distinct flavor, a blend of sawtoothed pinnacles, milky creeks, and rock-hard glaciers, spiced with strong overtones of remoteness and solitude. We'll hike out in the morning, but a glance at my map shows another hundred miles of higher, snowier mountains to the north. By the time Joe hands me a steaming mug, I've already resolved to return with a tent and full food bag". This 20-mile backpacking adventure will give you a savory taste of this rugged range and offer a fantastic introduction to Alaska backpacking. Our 4-day tour of the Talkeentas offers the full spectrum of Alaska backpacking beauty and challenges. Some of our hiking will be done off-trail and will include views of glaciers, rugged mountain scenery, and remote splendor.

In the document below you'll find information on the following:

- Trip Levels and Description of Physical Abilities
- Sample Day by Day Itinerary
- What is Included & What is Not
- Why Travel with Alaska Alpine Adventures
- Travel Info & Getting To and From Alaska
- Reservation and Cancellation Policies
- Gear Lists, Equipment Lists, Rental information
- FAQs



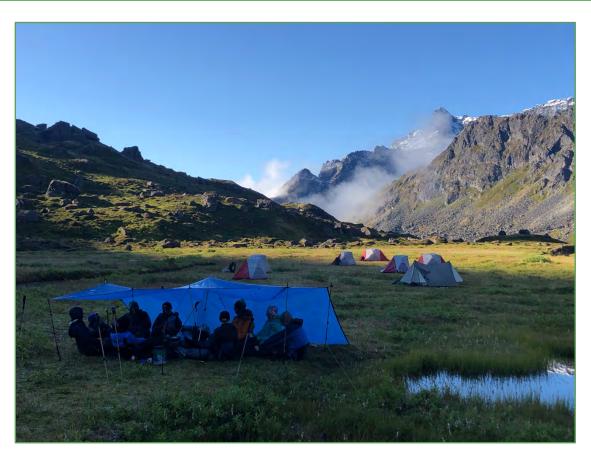
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Backpacking The Talkeetna Mountains is rated a <u>LEVEL 2 Backpacking</u> trip

Physical conditioning and consistent exercise prior to these trips IS mandatory.

Physical conditioning and consistent exercise prior to these trips is essential. You will be backpacking and hiking off-trail over steep, hilly, and uneven terrain, often covering more than 6 miles in a day with up to 2000' of elevation gain/loss. You may encounter short stretches of thick vegetation and may also experience Alaska's diverse selection of insect species. You will be camping in a very remote wilderness, sleeping in tents, relieving yourself in places with a stunning view, and sometimes enjoying all of the above in the rain. You will be expected to load and unload your own gear, carry a portion of the group gear, and manage your own physical comfort and well-being. Pre-trip physical conditioning should begin no later than 2 months before departure and should include walking or hiking, preferably with loaded backpack of 30-40 lbs.



Gathering together at the end of the day for delicious food and great conversation

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY (*Sample)

Day 1: This morning you'll start the day with an orientation and gear check at our shop in Anchorage. You'll then load into our passenger van and will begin the drive north to the Talkeetna Mountains. Your route will take you from Anchorage along the Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains and into Alaska's breadbasket – the Matanuska/ Susitna Valleys. From rural farmlands along the highway to the foothills of the Alaska Range, this drive will introduce you to Alaska's real character. By noon we'll be hoisting packs for the beginning of our 4 days and 3 nights in Alaska's oft overlooked Talkeetna Mountains. Today's route will take us up the Archangel trail and then up into the alpine tundra above at the headwaters of the Little Susitna River. Tonight, we'll camp next to a small creek beneath the route up to the Lane Glacier.

Lunch & dinner included.

Distance: 4-miles Elevation Gain: 1000'

Day 2: After a hearty breakfast and hot drink, we'll begin the day with the ascent toward the Lane Glacier or one of the adjacent alpine valleys. Today's hike will take us approximately 3 miles with elevation gain of approximately 2000'. We'll return to camp by late afternoon and will spend the evening enjoying the Alaska evening daylight and a gourmet meal.

All meals included.

Days 3: Today, we'll shoulder packs and head down valley toward Fairangel Creek. This hike has a great mix of on and off trail options, and our campsite sits beneath huge granite walls with neck-wrenching vertical relief. Rugged terrain shaped by the retreating glaciers common to Alaska's remote mountain ranges characterize the upper reaches of this stunning valley.

All meals included.

Distance: 4-miles Elevation Gain: 1000'

Day 4: After a leisurely breakfast, we'll break camp and prepare for our exit from the valley. But before we head back to the trail head, we'll take a day hike into the headwater's valley of Fairangel Creek. This stunning alpine valley is dotted with beautiful small lakes and towering alpine splendor. We'll return to the van by 5pm and will be back in Anchorage no later than 8pm. Please schedule all homebound flights for after 10pm.

Breakfast & lunch included

Distance: 5 miles, Elevation Gain: 800'

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*While Alaska Alpine Adventures endeavors to follow our itineraries as written, odds are in fact slim that you actually will during the camping portion of this trip. The expeditionary factors at play quite often compel our guides to deviate from the written itinerary. Guide considerations could include weather conditions, group preference, individual ability, specific safety considerations, or unforeseeable circumstances; collectively what many have called "The Alaska Factor." Flight times into and out of the wilderness may also vary based on any number of similar factors. Therefore, we strongly suggest that you approach any adventure in Alaska with an open mind.

What is Included

- **All Group Gear:** Expedition quality tents, group tarp, all cooking equipment & eating vessels and utensils.
- All Safety Equipment: Satellite phone, Garmin In-Reach, maps, and medical kit.
- Water Treatment: Aquamira (a 2-part) liquid chlorine dioxide system.
- Trekking Poles
- **Toilet Supplies:** Toilet paper, trowel, and hand sanitizer.
- Roundtrip Air Transportation: Between Anchorage and Hatcher Pass Alaska.
- All Meals: From lunch on day one through lunch on day 4 (final day of itinerary).
- Professional Guide Service: Maximum of a 4:1 guest to guide ratio.

What is Not Included

- Airfare to Anchorage Alaska: From your home city.
- **Pre or Post Lodging:** In Anchorage prior to & after your adventure.
- **Personal Gear:** Sleeping bag, sleeping pad, backpacks, rain gear, etc. See equipment Lists and available rental items below.
- Trip Cancellation/Interruption Insurance: HIGHLY SUGGESTED!
- Additional Lodging: Any additional lodging in Anchorage due to weather delays.
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Guide Gratuities: See below.



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Traveling with Alaska Alpine Adventures

GUIDES: It takes a talented individual to be able to lead an Alaska expedition, and our Alaska guides are true outdoor multi-sport professionals. We hand-select each guide based on their ability to deliver an unparalleled level of customer service, a strong wilderness skill set and background and an insatiable passion for Alaska's wild spaces. Each guide is medically certified as a Wilderness First Responder and carries the necessary qualifications to competently backpack, hike, kayak, canoe and climb throughout Alaska's vast wilderness. When you choose to travel with us, you can rest assured that your trip has been meticulously planned and executed by real Alaskans with authentic Alaska knowhow, skill, and ability.

FOOD: Our food is excellent – in fact it is something that clearly differentiates us from our competition. We have spent the past twenty-five years fine-tuning our backcountry menu. Breakfasts on our trips could include steel cut oats, egg scrambles, house-made granola and cereal, locally roasted coffee, assorted tea, and cocoa. In order to keep our food as light and compact as possible on our backpacking-specific itineraries, we don't pack full lunches. Instead, we take frequent breaks and snack throughout the day. Our "snack pack lunches" include a combination of energy bars, chocolate, meat, and cheese, and total just over 1000 calories. Dinners could include pasta carbonara, Alaska reindeer rotini, chicken and chipotle enchilada bowls, and more. And a delicious desert experience is always included after dinner.

CAMPING: Alaska Alpine Adventures has camped in some of Alaska's most remote and wild places; from the remote beaches of the Alaska Peninsula, the rugged glaciers of the Neacola Mountains, to the open tundra expanses of the Brooks Range. With literally thousands of nights camped in the Alaska wilderness in all seasons, we have refined camp craft to a science. Expedition quality tents included trekking poles, group-size tarp shelters, and only the best cooking equipment accompany each and every one of our wilderness trips. Not only does including the finest equipment make camp life more comfortable, but it also adds a level of safety to trips that could otherwise be relentlessly unforgiving to the unprepared. In other words, we take our camping very seriously!



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SMALL GROUPS: Small groups are the best way to witness the Last Frontier! This wilderness trip is limited to 8 guests. And with a guest to guide ratio of 4:1 you are assured of our commitment to risk management and safe operations. Furthermore, it is a best practice to keep groups exceptionally small to minimize our impact on the Alaskan backcountry by following Leave No Trace principles.

GRATUITIES: Tips to guides are left entirely to your discretion. While any amount is greatly appreciated, tips often range from 5-10% of the trip cost per person and are split among the guides.



An ideal campsite! Tents set up next to this amazing blue lake and open tundra



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Travel Information

GETTING TO ALASKA

This trip begins and ends in Anchorage, Alaska. Getting to Anchorage is easy. Alaska Airlines, your travel agent, online travel sources, or the carrier of your choice are options to easily arrange roundtrip airfare from international cities or the lower 48.



ACCOMMODATIONS



This is a real wilderness camping trip and you will be sleeping in backpacking-style tents for the three nights within the Hatcher Pass Management Area. You will need to bring a sleeping bag, rated to 30 degrees F. or warmer, and a sleeping pad (see included equipment list for details). There will be no hot running water, showers, beds, or cabins. This is "real" Alaska, and you will be completely immersed in it for the 3 nights.

LUGGAGE

If you chose to pack and check your backpack, make sure all the straps are cinched and buckled. The baggage conveyors have been known to eat these things! Please keep your luggage tagged, with your name easy to read. If you follow the gear list, you'll be spot-on! Of course, you're welcome to store any additional items at our shop while you are out in the field.



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RESERVATION AND CANCELLATION POLICY



The trip prices listed on our website and in our literature are per person, based on double occupancy and subject to a 3% Land & Water Access Fee. A deposit of \$1,000.00 per person is required to reserve a trip with Alaska Alpine Adventures. The remaining balance is due 45 days prior to the start of the trip. Reservations made within 45 days of the trip starting date require payment in full. Alaska Alpine Adventures strongly recommends trip cancellation insurance available through Ripcord,

Travel Guard, or your preferred insurer.

"I loved the 4-day Talkeetna Mountain trek. Perfect amount of time, beautiful hikes, and wonderful time in the season. My fiancé proposed there the following weekend because it was so special to me!

-Maria Rendon



Hikers ascending the Mint Valley

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RESERVATION & CANCELLATION POLICY CONTINUED - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Alaska Alpine Adventures reserves the right to cancel any trip because of internal reasons including but not limited to inadequate signups, loss of staff due to injury or illness and significant damage/loss of inventory. If Alaska Alpine Adventures cancels a trip due to internal reasons, a refund of the total amount paid will be given. Refunds are limited to the amount actually paid to Alaska Alpine Adventures.

Should your trip departure have to be cancelled or postponed by a force majeure (including but not limited to: weather causing delays or cancelled charter flights, fire, flood, volcanic eruption, pandemic, ongoing or newly introduced travel ban or government statement) Alaska Alpine Adventures and its partner operators are not obligated to provide a refund or offer alternative travel services. Thus, we strongly encourage you to purchase Trip Cancellation & Interruption Insurance so that you are covered in the event of an unexpected change of plans.

If the participant cancels a reservation earlier than 45 days prior to the starting date, the deposit will be refunded, minus a \$500.00/participant administration fee OR the participant can elect to keep the entire deposit on account to be used on a future trip prior to September 20, 2025. If the participant cancels within 45-30 days of the trip starting date, there will be no refund of any costs OR the participant can elect to keep 75% of any payments on account to be used on a future trip prior to September 20, 2025. If the participant cancels within 30-days, there will be no refund of any costs.

ITINERARY CHANGES OR DELAYS

Alaska Alpine Adventures reserves the right to change the itinerary of a trip. Occasionally, weather, or other factors may cause delays, destination changes, or make completing a trip impossible. In these circumstances, there will be no refund of fees. Alaska Alpine Adventures is not responsible for any additional costs (e.g., airline flight changes, additional hotel nights, etc.) associated with trip delays or itinerary changes due to weather or other factors.

TRIP MINIMUMS

To assure any Alaska Alpine Adventures departure, a minimum number of participants must sign up. This trip requires a minimum of 3 guests to guarantee departure. However, in the event your departure doesn't meet the minimum we will still operate the trip at below the minimum required for a modest surcharge. Please see our Reservations Page for more information regarding trip minimums.

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EQUIPMENT INFORMATION - BACKPACKING THE TALKEETNA MOUNTAINS

This document lists ALL clothing, equipment and other gear needed for your Alaska Alpine Adventure.

Please note that some items will be supplied by Alaska Alpine Adventures; other items you will need to provide yourself. The checklist below contains all of the clothing and gear required for this trip offered by Alaska Alpine Adventures. By following them, you should find yourself well equipped for your adventure. We are always happy to discuss equipment needs with you, so please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

TRUST YOURSELF, NOT THE WEATHER!

We travel light, yet spare few comforts, and the following checklists reflect this dogma. Our lists are based on typical seasonal and environmental conditions you are likely to encounter. Please refer to your particular adventure's itinerary for specific weather conditions you can expect at your destination. Living by the tenant of "hope for the best, plan for worst, and probably get something right in between" has served us quite well and often seems to sum up the Alaska experience. Environmental comfort levels will vary from person to person, so please select your clothing and equipment accordingly and use the following checklists as a guide. It must be stressed that the items listed (or your own favorite substitution) are **MANDATORY** and must be in your possession when you head into the field.

OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

Over the course of many years spent in the most rugged environments, your Alaska Alpine Adventures guides have had the opportunity to put their gear and clothing to the ultimate test - daily use. Our guides have repeatedly found that certain companies produce consistently tough, durable products that stand up to both time and the elements. You can find most of these brands at your local outdoor retailer or online. The Alaska Alpine Adventures website also contains links to suppliers, printable gear lists, and helpful videos. We've also included the gear list below.

AVAILABLE RENTAL ITEMS

Alaska Alpine Adventures rents quality down and synthetic sleeping bags, inflatable air mattresses and Crazy Creek chairs for this trip. Please visit our rental page on our website by clicking THIS_LINK for more info.



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Packing & Gear Lists

• Backpack - Men's minimum size is 70L / Women's minimum size is 60L

The group gear that Alaska Alpine Adventures provides (bear barrel, food, tent pieces, etc.) will occupy a minimum of 18L of your pack! Keep that in mind when purchasing a backpack. If in doubt, err on the side of a larger pack; it will make packing and unpacking much easier each day. We also recommend a professional pack fitting if you are purchasing a new backpack for your trip.

Guides Choice: The one that fits your body best!

- Waterproof pack cover: Large enough to fit your pack when it's full
- **IL water bottle:** Hydration bladders are acceptable in addition to one wide-mouth, hard-sided bottle.

Guides Choice: Wide-mouth Nalgene water bottle

Hiking boots for backpacking: Quality medium/heavy-duty hiking boots

It is very critical that you break in your boots BEFORE you arrive, as traveling with blisters is a painful way to enjoy Alaska!

Guides Choice: Salomon Quest 4D 3 GTX

• Waterproof/breathable rain jacket <u>AND</u> rain pants - *BOTH Pieces are mandatory* Gore-Tex or similar quality waterproof/breathable GOOD rain gear is essential on any wilderness outing and is probably the most important piece of gear that you have on your trip.

Guides Choice: Outdoor Research Foray Jacket AND Pants

Hiking Layers - Synthetic or wool, no cotton

Lightweight wind shirt

Guides Choice: Patagonia Houdini Jacket

• 1 mid-weight long sleeve synthetic top: Daily use as a base layer shirt that you'll wear all day.

Guides Choice: Patagonia Capilene Lightweight Crew

• 1 mid-weight synthetic bottom: To be worn under your hiking pant or rain pant on a cold/wet days

Guides Choice: Patagonia Capilene Lightweight Bottoms

- 1 pair synthetic hiking pants: Daily use hiking pant that you'll wear all day
- 1 pair lightweight synthetic shorts: Convertible hiking pant/shorts are OK

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- 1 lightweight T-shirt: Synthetic
- 4 pair of hiking socks: Synthetic or wool mid-weight hiking socks.
- 1 warm beanie hat: Synthetic or wool
- 1 billed hat: Keeps your face protected from the sun
- 1 mosquito head net
- 1 pair of gloves: Synthetic or wool.

Camp Life

- Sleeping bag: Synthetic or down sleeping bag rated to a minimum of 30 F°
 - o Available for rent, includes a waterproof compression stuff sack
- 2 waterproof compression stuff sacks: One large enough to fit your sleeping bag & One large enough to fit your extra layers.

Guides Choice: Sea to Summit eVent Compression Dry Sacks

- Sleeping pad: Closed-cell foam pad or inflatable air mattress
 - o Inflatable air mattress available for rent
- Headlamp: For trips departing after August 1st
- **Camp chair:** Crazy-Creek style, soft, folding camp chair or Therm-a-Rest conversion chair kit to fit inflatable mattress.

Guides Choice: Crazy Creek Hex 2.0 Original chair

- \circ Crazy-Creeks is available for rent.
- **Insulated mug:** Save weight and the bulk & use your wide mouth water bottle for both hot and cold drinks. We recommend wide mouth, as it' easier to pour hot water into for hot drinks.
- Synthetic underwear: 3 to 4 pair should suffice
- 1 heavyweight synthetic top

Guides Choice: Patagonia Capilene Thermal Weight Crew

• 1 heavyweight synthetic or fleece bottoms

Guides Choice: Patagonia Capilene Thermal Weight Bottoms

1 synthetic or down lightweight puffy jacket

Guides Choice: Outdoor Research Transcendent Down Pullover

• **Camp shoes**: Light-weight Crocs or sport sandals. Used for getting out of your hiking/paddling shoes around camp and crossing streams and rivers.

Guides choice: Crocs Original Classic Clogs

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• **Sacred socks:** Heavy, warm pair of socks to put on at night.

The name says it all – they're sacred –we keep ours IN our sleeping bag until bedtime. Different than what you'll wear while in camp in your camp shoes, we usually wear a neoprene sock with the crocs or something that can still get wet while walking around camp, if the tundra/ground is wet, or its raining.

PERSONAL EFFECTS

- Sunglasses with case
- Toiletries
- Personal medications
- Sunscreen/lip protection
- Pack towel
- Book/reading materials
- Camera
- Journal and pen
- Binoculars
- Insect repellent



Hiking through talus fields to glacier silt lakes

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED ITEMS

- Bandana
- 2 accessory carabiners
- 2 pair synthetic liner socks
- Waterproof gaiters

Guides Choice: Outdoor Research Verglas Gaiter

Small personal drybag to protect your camera and electronics

PACKING AND GEAR VIDEOS

For more information on gear, clothing & packing for your trip. click <u>THIS LINK</u> to check out Alaska Alpine Adventure's YouTube channel for helpful and informative packing and gear videos.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will I be kept safe on the trip?

Because our trips take place in remote & wild environments, there are inherent risk factors that can't be entirely avoided without compromising the unique character of the activities associated with adventure travel. Obviously, it's not our intention to reduce your enthusiasm for outdoor adventure activities, but we believe it is important for everyone to know in advance that real adventure involves real risk, much of which simply cannot be controlled Alaska Alpine Adventures or Alaska Alpine Adventures' employees. By joining one of our trips, you are representing that you understand, and are accepting of, the risks described in the acknowledgment/release document that all participants are required to sign. You are also representing that you will accept the degree of personal responsibility necessary to participate in adventure travel activities.

What about the mosquitoes?

In case you've heard horror stories... the number of mosquitoes is greatly dependent on hatching season, annual weather conditions, specific locations, and time of year. While you are bound to encounter some mosquitoes during the course of your summer adventure, their numbers rarely present major problems. That said, please arrive prepared with insect repellent and a head net to fend off any bugs that are present.

Will bears be a problem?

Alaska is bear country! There are both grizzly and black bears in most of the wilderness areas of Alaska we visit. We love seeing bears in the wild and consider bear sightings one of the most thrilling privileges common in Alaska's backcountry. That said, traveling safely and taking precautions to minimize a negative encounter are considerations we take very seriously. In addition to conducting a thorough pre-trip bear safety orientation, your guides also take many precautions on all of our trips including: 1) all of our food is packaged to minimize odors – we vacuum seal most of our fresh ingredients and sauces, we pack our food in bear resistant food canisters, and we store our food well away from camp. 2) We make noise when we're hiking in thick brush or when we're hiking in windy conditions to minimize surprise encounters. 3) We keep an exceptionally clean camp and 4) as a last resort guides travel armed carrying pepper spray.



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Will I see wildlife on my trip?

It's important to keep in mind that while we do have abundant wildlife populations in Alaska, animals are often obscured by the vastness of the landscape, subject to imprecise migration routes and often affected by Alaska's dynamic weather patterns.

While wildlife viewing on our trips has been historically reliable, and we schedule our trips to maximize the chances of seeing wildlife, there are simply too many factors to make any guarantees.

What will the weather be like on my trip?

Alaska has some of the most dynamic and dramatic weather on the planet. During the summer months in Alaska, average daytime temperatures range from 60° to 80°F. Nighttime and morning temperatures are cooler, but rarely dip below 40°F. Fall arrives early at these latitudes and you'll experience cooler temperatures and fewer hours of daylight in late August and early September. Throughout the summer season, you may experience rain, sun, wind, clouds, and fog on your adventure. We live by the adage "prepare for the worst, hope for the best, and you'll likely end up with some of both".



Granite walls tower above talus piles

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